

**NO SWEAT**

The effects of global warming mean we'll soon be crotch-deep in melted ice caps unless we reduce the amount of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere. The latest thinking seems to favour more nuclear power stations, so radiation leaks can make us mutate and sprout fins. But that would mean lots of extra zippers in our clothing.

Zygote suggests a faster and safer method of saving the world, while also saving a lot of money: turn off your flaming PCs when you're not using them. Home computer users in this country created an extra 220,000 tons of carbon dioxide last year, because they couldn't be bothered to switch off their PCs, and our laziness wasted £41 million in extra electricity bills. Office workers were worse, pumping out 645,000 tons of the stuff and squandering £123 million in the process. It is a fallacy that leaving a PC on standby is environmentally friendly. It is not. Most standby modes demand up to 90 per cent of normal power consumption and even hibernation mode requires a constant trickle of energy.

The reason most people leave computers switched on is because it takes so long for all the useless crap on their systems to boot up. Windows users can view the aforementioned crap by hitting Run, typing in msconfig and gazing in horror at what's in their Startup folder. Apple users won't bother to do this. Instead they will wait patiently to pay over the odds for the Steve Jobs solution: the waterproof Mac.

EBAY GUM

Buying and selling online is an enjoyable hobby for millions and a mainstream business for some.

ZYGOTE

Not content with defending democracy from capitalist lickspittles intent on destroying our freedoms, Zygote also tries to save the world from global warming – by turning his computer off

The point of outfits such as eBay, which facilitates the boom industry of electronic car boot sales, is that the internet is harnessed to do everything directly, cutting out those traditional whores and pimps known as wholesalers and retailers.

So it is with huge amusement that Zygote picked up a copy of *eBuyer & Online Seller* magazine, a traditional publication using ink and paper, which boasts the byline: "Our expert trade secret tips = pots of money!" How right they are. The magazine costs a hefty £4.99 in the shops. However, Zygote managed to pick one up for a mere 45p. On eBay, of course.

CITIZEN CANED

In August 2004, £2.5million of taxpayers' money was allocated to publicise the government's £4 billion e-government investment. The funding was specifically earmarked to pay for the flagship website e-citizen.gov.uk, and Zygote is duty-bound to report on the outcome. Zygote can do this with considerable accuracy, because one of his many jobs is to examine the popularity rankings of several hundred public

service websites and tabulate the numbers of human visitors they attract, as opposed to the bilge and waffle claimed by publicity departments and webmasters trying to cover their arses.

At the time of writing, the traffic rank for e-citizen.gov.uk stands at 3,941,304th in the popularity table of websites in the public domain. This weighs in at less than five visits to the website per day, indicating that not even internal staff can be bothered to visit their own site. The notable exception to this is a tally of 203 visits from the administrator of the website's online discussion forum, who must be a deeply frustrated person, seeing as the forum can boast only two active members. Those visitors who do get to the site by some accidental freak suffer viewing just two or three pages before quitting.

You may think the official website's success in publicising e-government deserves a special sort of performance-related reward, such as decapitation with a blunt sword. Or maybe solitary confinement inside the toilet bowl of the Deputy Prime Minister, who is responsible

for pushing local authorities online. A new campaign has been launched to publicise e-government, and guess what the budget is this time round? Not £2.5 million, but double that amount. Five website visitors a day? Five million quid? What nice round figures those are.

Zygote hopes that a small percentage of his millions of readers will visit www.e-citizen.gov.uk and deliver a healthy increase in its website visitor numbers. He will nominate a suitable charity where the saved budget can be more usefully directed.

HEIL DISNEY

The War on Terror has always been dangerous and cynical, but it is troubling to see it being exploited by the entertainment industry and turned into farce. The likes of Disney, Sony and EMI have demanded that the European Parliament extends anti-terror laws to give them access to private email and web search logs.

Perhaps they have secret intelligence that terrorists are planning to pirate Winnie The Pooh and use the money for honey of mass destruction. Or perhaps they are just a bunch of capitalist lickspittles who have already lost the battle against illegal downloads. You don't need Zygote to tell you that this has nothing to do with international security and everything to do with media moguls trying to gain access to personal data for their own commercial ends.

If European democracies even consider using anti-terror laws to combat file-sharing of music and video, we might as well have thrown in the towel when Hitler and Stalin tried to carve us up in 1939. Our emails are private property, just like the thoughts in our heads, no matter what they contain. ☹

Great Moments in Computing
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218: DOWNLOADS



The first successful download was achieved in March 1834, in Tolpuddle, Dorset, England



But when consumers demanded fast delivery in the twentieth century, they were badly disappointed



In the past few months, download volumes and consumer speeds have increased rapidly